

FOR COMM CENTER USE ONLY

PP  
PRECEDENCE

SECRET  
CLASSIFICATION

FROM: PL RICHARD C. HART TO: 23  
BY: S. MCFARLANE

DEX \_\_\_\_\_

DAC 0209

SFS \_\_\_\_\_

LDX \_\_\_\_\_

PAGES 13

TTY \_\_\_\_\_

CITE \_\_\_\_\_

INFO:

DTG: 020925Z

RELEASED BY:

TOR: 021049Z

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:



UNCLASSIFIED

HAKTO-23

June 2, 1975

TO: BUD McFARLANE - WHITE HOUSE  
FROM: PETER RODMAN *PR*  
REF: HAKTO-22

1. As indicated Refel, here is copy of my redraft of speech based on your and Theis drafts. It includes some HAK edits, and it has been given to Friedman.
2. Warm regards.

ATTACHMENT

UNCLASSIFIED

NSC/PT

June 1, 1975

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AT U.S. MILITARY  
ACADEMY COMMENCEMENT, WEST POINT, N.Y.

Wednesday, June 4, 1975

[Informal Opening Remarks]

\* \* \*

I am delighted to be here on the Plain. Perhaps only an old Navy man knows how much that means. Sailors have not always found West Point so hospitable. The British Navy learned that during the Revolutionary War, and I understand that you still re-teach the lesson to some American Midshipmen each year.

Be that as it may, I want to turn my pleasure in being here into a more practical expression. I am aware of the tradition of this institution that a visiting Head of State is entitled to remit all punishments. [I am a little cautious about granting another pardon, but] General Mac Arthur once said, "The long gray line has never failed us" -- and today I am not about to fail the long gray line. So with the powers vested in me as your Commander in Chief, I hereby order the remission of all ordinary punishments immediately;

Now that I have your undivided attention, let's get down to business.

-2-

You -- the Class of 1975 -- accept your commissions as officer in the United States Army just days before that Army celebrates its 200th birthday. For two centuries, the United States Army has defended -- and represented -- freedom. West Point has trained the leaders of that Army ever since this Academy's founding in 1802. The purpose of this great Army and this great Academy are one and the same, and have been since their beginning: to be ready at the nation's call to carry out -- with dedication and honor -- the duty of defending the liberty of our land and people.

The defense of freedom will take many forms in the years ahead. The will of America will always be tested. It is our job -- yours and mine -- to be prepared for these tests. It is worth remembering what it is we are defending, for it is a precious thing, and our pride in it is the truest source of our strength.

It is worth remembering that it was in the Administration of Thomas Jefferson that this Academy was founded. We have had no Chief Executive who was more consistently suspicious of large standing armies or more ardent in his belief in civilian authority over the military. Nevertheless, Mr. Jefferson understood the

-3-

need for quality in all things and did not doubt the need for a professional military leadership to defend freedom and free men. And it is no coincidence that President Jefferson too sent American military forces to faraway shores to defend free commerce from those who would seize American ships in international waters and make captives of their crews.

Those who defend liberty must believe in it. Those who truly believe in liberty must be willing to defend it. This is my philosophy -- and the tradition of West Point.

Times change. America has changed. But the long gray line and its tradition are one of the constants in our history. They have their roots in Jefferson's time; you personally will carry it forward into the next century.

\* \* \* \*

It is often said on occasions such as this that never before have the problems of the world been so complex. Yet it is true. It is also true that never before in our history has the fate of this nation -- our daily lives -- been so intertwined with the fate of the rest

-4-

of the world. The Middle East war and energy crisis of 1973 dramatized what should have been understood long before~~ff~~ that our security and our prosperity are vitally affected by the stability and progress of the international system. No nation is isolated; no nation can realize its destiny alone. No nation -- and certainly no great nation -- can achieve its own national objectives without participating constructively in the international order. And an enormous responsibility rests upon us, for we have maintained the global peace and maintained the global prosperity for the last thirty years.

Our strength through the years has been not merely in our vast resources or technological genius or military prowess -- all of which are second to none. Our greatest strength has been our spirit -- the courage with which free men harnessed these elements of material strength to the achievement of great ends.

This spirit comes from faith in America, and faith in America means confidence in ourselves, and trust in each other. This is the spirit of American unity.

-5-

Without our unity at home there can be no consistent American leadership abroad. Never before has it been so essential that we heal our wounds, and end our mutual antagonisms, and recover our sense that we as Americans are all engaged in a common endeavor.

We have had setbacks -- but their significance truly depends on what we do now, more than on what happened before. So many nations wait and watch how we will respond. But this is my source of hope -- for it means our future is in our own hands.

I have therefore called upon the Congress and my fellow citizens to recall that there is much public business to be done. There are national responsibilities to be fulfilled, at home and abroad.

We cannot expect success at the summit talks of the world if we are not united at the summit -- in the national leadership -- at home. We cannot be a family divided if we expect to succeed as a people. We are supposed to be the United States of America.

If we are together, there is much we can achieve.

\* \* \*

-6-

Because America is at peace today, some would disparage the purse and power of our national defense and international commitments and neglect them. Yet this nation has consistently, over the last 20 years, reduced the ratio of defense spending, while our adversaries have substantially increased theirs.

Our expenditure for defense has been declining in real terms. It has dropped in real terms, to its lowest level since just before the Korean conflict. The <sup>of potential adversaries</sup> ~~Soviet~~ military build-up is continuing, and ~~Soviet~~ military expenditure grows at about three to five percent a year.

Since 1945, the peace of the world has <sup>been preserved by American</sup> ~~witnessed~~ near-uninterrupted <sup>facts</sup> ~~war~~. For much of that 35 years, Americans have shouldered arms and we have sacrificed blood and treasure. We should not overlook that the security of Europe and much of Asia, and indeed the balance of power globally, has been preserved and is being preserved by American strength.

We know there cannot be true security or prosperity at home if there is not real peace in the world. And so too, there cannot and will not be war on this continent if our adversaries are convinced that we are so militarily strong that war would only bring on their disaster.



-7-

If we are to have the best defense in the world -- and I still believe the people and the Congress of the United States desire that, despite recent Congressional action to cut our defense budget for fiscal 1976 -- then this Nation must be prepared to pay the price that is necessary. This, certainly, is no time to make deeper cuts in our defense budget. This is the time to support our important new programs -- ranging from the 16-division army and the modern B-1 intercontinental bomber to the research and development programs essential to maintain qualitative superiority for the future.

No graduating class in the history of West Point will be called on to fill so many diverse roles in this increasingly complex world. As young officers in the complex world of today, you must know military strategy, tactics and logistics. But today -- as never before -- you must understand history, economics, science, international affairs, diplomacy, just to mention a few. Some of you may become diplomats as well as generals. At the same time, no graduates will be called on to fulfill such diversity with such unity of mission. The greatest mission of the United States today -- and in the immediate future -- is the projection of clear and firm national unity and commitment.

-8-

You must understand power -- and the limits of power. You must understand war -- and, if necessary, carry out war -- but you must also comprehend the deterrents to war.

There is one aspect of duty that I wish to caution you about -- never confuse what may be popular with what is right. Moreover, never confuse public accolades -- or lack of them -- with national appreciation. Too often, we have taken our armed forces for granted. Too often, we have seen public apathy to military achievement. Despite all this, the dedication to country and response to the call of duty which motivated the Continental army still motivates the ranks of today's Army officer corps which you are about to join. And I am confident it ever will.

Only the most stubbornly unrealistic of us can imagine that we do not need your best efforts in these times. The same adversaries who have probed for and exploited signs of weakness in the past continue to extend and improve their own military capacity. Unless we continue to meet this challenge -- as I am determined to do -- there can be no prospect for success in our efforts to defuse tensions in the world. Particularly at this time, we must

-9-

avoid the error that this nation has made in the past of too eagerly turning away after an ended conflict, too rapidly letting down our guard.

But even as your fellow citizens accept their need for your service, many of them will still not comprehend your mission and the demands it makes upon you. They will take you for granted or abuse you -- except in moments of crisis.

Your career will exact high dues: Periodic danger, separation from loved ones, moves so frequent that you may become nervous about laying down roots in any place. But it will also offer unique opportunities. It is unlikely that any of your contemporaries will have so early the opportunities and challenges which some of you will face within weeks. You will be charged with the upkeep and operation of technology more expensive and complex than some men will ever handle. More important, you will be responsible for the well-being of other Americans, sometimes in situations where decisions will be literally matters of life and death. Your apprenticeship, with its basic education, is ending, and you may be expected to use its lessons at any time. It is an enormous human task.

-10-

Your profession will make different, often higher, demands upon you than upon most of your contemporaries. I hope those demands only intensify for you the sense of the reasons for them, and your profession's mission.

As long as I am President, you will not be taken for granted.

\* \* \*

I have just returned from a trip to Europe to strengthen the peace. I found at the summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty nations a new sense of unity and a confidence in America that were most encouraging to me. I am convinced our major alliances are strong and firm; I am convinced our allies' confidence in us is not misplaced.

In Salzburg I met with Egypt's President Sadat, to continue our exploration of new steps toward peace in

-11-

the Middle East. That is the most serious international issue of our time. The United States is in a unique position to help promote a peaceful solution -- and I am determined that we will make that effort.

The American commitment to the defense of freedom and peace since World War II -- the 30-year sweep of a generation -- has been so deep and enduring that it serves no purpose to recount it here. But it does serve a purpose to remind ourselves, our friends and our adversaries that we are yet prepared to pay the price of freedom -- in full or in part -- as circumstances may require.

This is why I am here today at West Point. This is why you are here at West Point.

Mr. Jefferson in his first Inaugural address sought to remind his fellow Americans of their crucial similarities, regardless of party, by saying, "We are all Republicans,

-12-

we are all Federalists." (I wish the first part were true!)

I can think of no better way to remind you of your  
up coming service, and to remind us of our common rights  
and responsibilities as civilians, than to say: We are  
all citizens; we are all defenders of freedom; we are  
all Americans.

Thank you and Godspeed.

End text